



A glimpse into the grand spiritual personality and inspiring lifestyle of **BABA ISHER SINGH JI** **NANAKSAR KALERAN**

Principal Balbir Singh Hansra

Baba Isher Singh Ji was born village of Jhorran, Tehsil Jagraon, district Ludhiana on March 26, 1916 to the respected S. Bagga Singh Ji and Bibi Partap Kaur Ji. It is said that from birth Baba Ji's soul merged with a higher spirituality. He continuously mediated with a merciful, peaceful heart that was imbued with an unparalleled spiritual energy bestowed on his shoulders by Akal Purakh himself.

Baba Isher Singh Ji had four brothers and two sisters and from his early childhood days, he would be focused on a deeper, more superior existence, devoting his deeds to a lifestyle founded by Guru Nanak Sahib. From the earliest age, Baba Ji would assemble children of the same age and partake in spiritual discussions and the recitation of Gurbani and Path. In his youth days, Baba Ji started helping his mother and father in running the household and performed traditional agricultural work but would forever attune his concentration to the intoxicating ambrosial nectar of Naam Simran while doing his tasks.

Baba Isher Singh Ji continued to share his divine insights with local residents and worked rigorously to provide earnings, food and belongings to all. He saw God's light in all, and forever yearned to be in the presence and Sewa of Gursikhs.

In 1929, Baba Nand Singh Ji of Nanaksar-Kaleran came to Village Jhorran, as part of the Amrit Parchar campaign. It was during this visit that, destiny played a role in the meeting of two great minds. This initial visit was of an angelic nature. Baba Nand Singh Ji saw the light of Sikhi shine in the younger Baba Isher Singh Ji and instantly commenced his praise of the young saint. While residing at Village Jhorran, Baba Nand Singh Ji remarked that he needed a chief attendant who was young, pious and of a religious disposition from that village. He further added that the attendant should be a man of firm determination and capable of entertaining the fear and anger of the Master as well as love for him.

After their work on the family lands, each of Baba Ji's brothers was granted a reward for their service in harvesting the wheat crop. However, Baba Ji used his entire share in preparing Parshad for the offering of Baba Nand Singh Ji at Nanaksar-Kaleran. His longing for

Baba Isher Singh Ji strongly emphasized the need to become Amritdhari. He would visit countless villages and cities throughout India to advance his Amrit Parchar.

Service and Simran increased manifold.

Baba Nand Singh Ji asked Baba Ji's mother "how many sons do you have" to which she replied "five." Immediately Baba Nand Singh Ji questioned whether she could "spare one for sewa" to which she affirmatively replied in hukam. Baba Isher Singh had his prayers answered.

From this moment onwards, Baba Isher Singh Ji served as the most devoted Gurmukh Sewadar (personal attendant) to Baba Nand Singh Ji. Baba Ji's sewa and responsibilities increased rapidly and when he was just 27, Baba Isher Singh Ji became the Hazoori (chief) Sewadar. Baba Ji's soul was abundant in Naam Simran and he used this undying commitment to serve Baba Nand Singh Ji with unmatched devotion. Baba Ji was always attentive while on duty as the Hazoori Sewadar and he performed his sewa through treacherous domains barefoot without ever uttering a single complaint. He sacrificed all personal comforts and was ever vigilant towards his duties.

Prior to Baba Nand Singh Ji left for his heavenly abode in 1943, he assembled his closest sewadars (associates) and uttered that Baba Isher Singh Ji had performed perfect sewa and was the only one entrusted to take further the mission of Guru Nanak Sahib. Baba Nand Singh Ji instructed them to show utmost respect to Baba Isher Singh Ji. Upon Baba Nand Singh Ji's departure to heaven, Baba Ji could not bear the separation and returned to a place outside of Village Jhorran and devoted himself to seven years of continuous recitations of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Without the presence of a true master, Nanaksar turned into a different place. Initially, Baba Ji had no desire to occupy the location due to the misuse it encountered at the hands of selfish and irresponsible people. Furthermore, the sacred system of worship imprinted by Baba Nand Singh Ji had been tarnished by

wrongdoers. In response to the decline of the shrine, humble devotees congregated at Village Jhorran to earnestly request Baba Ji to restore the sanctity of the holy place.

Baba Isher Singh Ji engraved a whole new chapter and set Nanaksar's maryada in impervious stone. In addition to the Kirtan and Akand Paths of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Baba Ji also started Nitnem and Kirtan at many other Gurdwaras situated at Jhorran, Bhadaur, Barnala, Barundi, Samadh Bhai, Dehradun, Ludhiana, and Seerah.

Baba Isher Singh Ji's legacy coupled two fundamental tenets which hold the key to salvation in this life and beyond. In the first, Baba Ji stressed the ceaseless message of Guru Nanak Sahib concerning universal brotherhood and doing well for all. He emphasized the eternal spirituality of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and explained that in order to escape the clutches of physical and emotional suffering, one must confine in the teachings and recognize the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as the living divinity of our ten Gurus and that one should never distinguish between the divine scripture and our Guru Ji's as they are of an identical roop, jot and atma (body, light and soul). The second legacy specifies the necessity of giving your head to Guru Gobind Singh Ji through taking him as your father through the process of Amrit and attaining true liberation to surpass the fear of death.

Baba Isher Singh Ji strongly emphasized the need to become Amritdhari. He would visit countless villages and cities throughout India to advance his Amrit Parchar, and the scenes witnessed at these locations were truly staggering as entire villages would come to a halt, and all persons (young or old) would flock to his diwans in the masses to take the holy nectar from the Panj (five) Pyare.

Baba Isher Singh Ji had such a magnetic attraction in his saintly eyes that one would totally surrender after his holy darshan. Many non-believers came to him for discussion and to debate their ideologies but in an instant they fell at his holy feet and begged for sanctuary in the house of Guru Nanak Sahib. There were always huge gatherings in hundreds of thousands wherever he held his diwans (from Northern, Eastern, Western, and Southern India). Baba Ji always began his discourses with a Shabad, followed by Kirtan and Katha.

Baba Isher Singh Ji's mission was to propagate Bani (Daily Prayers) and Bana (by becoming an Amritdhari Sikh). To give one example, Baba Ji once went to Kanpur, and the devotees came out there with an industrialist, who owned acres of lands and many factories. The devotees spoke very highly of this individual and informed Baba Ji of his great wealth and financial achievements. After their discussion, Baba Ji asked the businessman about how much time he devotes to Gurbani. He replied that he has no time since he has a very busy schedule due to his business ventures. After hearing his response, Baba Ji responded back in an instant, "The devotees were telling me that you are very wealthy and gifted, however, in my opinion, you're nothing more than bankrupt."

To give another example, Baba Isher Singh Ji went to Patna Sahib during his voyage to Calcutta. There was an individual who came for the first time to have Baba Ji's darshan and listen to his holy discourses. He was a clean shaven man whose name was Bakhshi Singh. He was a very wealthy and successful businessman who owned his own transport company. He was immediately awestruck by the depth and substance of the discourses received. After the initial encounter, Bakhshi Singh started coming to Baba Ji's diwan everyday as he longed

Baba Ji incessantly affirmed that Sikhi cannot be demolished by anyone, in fact, those who try to demolish Sikhi will get annihilated themselves.

to hear more anecdotes to improve his existence. However, after a couple of days, Baba Ji announced at his diwan that he would be continuing his journey to Calcutta. In front of the entire sangat, Bakhshi Singh stood up and requested Baba Ji with folded hands to give both the town and himself another week. Baba Ji told Bakhshi Singh he would agree to his request only if he makes some contribution to him. Bakhshi Singh thought that since many saints had come and gone from Patna Sahib, he could use his previous methodologies and give a lump cash amount in return for another day or week. Realizing that he was very wealthy and that any offering was in his range, Bakhshi Singh agreed to give Baba Ji any donation.

At his agreement, Baba Ji said, "Bakhshi Singh, What you have thought of in your head is nothing compare to what I'm looking for. My offering is way more than you could ever imagine". Bakhshi Singh was startled by Baba Ji's statement, but again thought of doubling his last offer and once more spoke in front of the entire sangat that he was in complete agreement with Baba Ji's bheta (offering). However, Baba Ji again questioned Bakhshi Singh's contribution, and said "our demand is way more than what you have thought of this time around also." Again, Bakhshi Singh agreed to whatever bheta Baba Ji would ask, and again reiterated that he would definitely give the donation, and said he "will not back away from his word."

Baba Ji again asked (one final time) "Bakhshi Singh, you're giving me your word in front of everyone, so think once again, and don't back out." When he agreed for the last time, Baba Ji shocked him by telling him, "I'm not here to collect your money, I'm asking you to become an Amritdhari along with your family so you could devote your time to the Guru as in spite of your wealth and business, I've never met a man as poor as you." Immediately, Bakhshi Singh in awe and disbelief at what had just happened (as for the first time in his life, his wealth was considered worthless) started to cry and pleaded for eternal forgiveness. Baba Ji stayed at Patna Sahib for another week and administered Bakhshi Singh and his family with the holiest gift imaginable Kaligdar's Amrit.

Baba Ji incessantly affirmed that Sikhi cannot be demolished by anyone, in fact, those who try to demolish Sikhi will get annihilated themselves.

In spite of the hundreds of thousands of people to witness Baba Isher Singh Ji's Amrit Parchar at any given time, there were strict orders in place for no advertising or announcements to be made.

Baba Ji addressed his last congregation at Nanaksar in the Diwan of Pooranmashi on October 3, 1963. During this most divine discourse, Baba Ji gave countless indications that he would soon leave to merge in Guru Nanak Charna. Three days later, on October 7, 1963, three days later, when he was only 47 years old, after the evening Kirtan Darbar, Baba Ji's soul returned home.



Principal Balbir Singh
Hansra M.A.
E-Mail: hansrab@gmail.com